

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00

EB-07 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 L-03 OMB-01 TRSE-00 SS-15

NSC-05 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 /051 W

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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3756

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 5140

FOR NEA/PAB

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: EAIR, EINV, AF, US

SUBJECT: PANAM-ARIANA RELATIONS

REF: STATE 177570

1. PANAM COMPANY OFFICERS CHARLES TRIPPE AND ERSKINE RICE ARRIVED KABUL AUGUST 6 AND HAVE HAD LENGTHY SESSION WITH EMBASSY OFFICERS RELATING TO PANAM'S DESIRE TO CHANGE THE NATURE OF THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH ARIANA.

2. TRIPPE AND RICE HAVE SAID TO US THAT THEIR INSTRUCTIONS FROM CORPORATE HEADQUARTERS GIVE THEM VIRTUALLY NO FLEXIBILITY IN GOAL OF TRYING TO RECOVER AT LEAST \$3-4 MILLION RIGHT AWAY OF PANAMERICAN'S ESTIMATED CURRENT ASSETS OF APPROXIMATELY 6 MILLION DOLLARS IN ARIANA. (THIS POSTURE CONTRASTS WITH YOUR ACCOUNT OF PANAM'S POSITION IN PARA 6 REFTEL.)

3. EMBOFFS STRESSED TO PANAM OFFICERS THE IMPORTANCE WE ASCRIBE TO A CONTINUING ASSOCIATION WITH ARIANA AND ALSO OUR BELIEF THAT IT VERY IMPORTANT FOR ALL PRIVATE ENTERPRISE OPERATING IN AFGHANISTAN THAT ARIANA AND GOVERNMENT OF AFGHANISTAN ADHERE TO CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENTS.

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4. TRIPPE AND RICE HAVE DEVELOPED A SCENARIO WHICH WOULD

INVOLVE THE CREATION AND RATIFICATION DURING UPCOMING BOARD MEETING OF A NEW AGREEMENT WHICH WOULD GIVE THE AFGHANS MORE CONTROL OF DAY-TO-DAY AMANGEMENT OPERATIONS, ALLOW PAN AMERICAN TO OBTAIN SOME CASH AND PRESERVE A SUPPORT ROLE FOR PANAM IN ARIANA'S OPERATIONS.

5. WE HAVE SUGGESTED THAT TRIPPE AND RICE CALL ON SULTAN GHAZI, PRESIDENT AFGHAN AIR AUTHORITY, AND KEY FIGURE IN THIS SITUATION AND EXPLORE WITH HIM THE TRIPPE/RICE SCENARIO. WE HAVE URGED TRIPPE AND RICE TO STRESS REPEATEDLY PANAM'S INTEREST IN A CONTINUING RELATIONSHIP AND HAVE CAUTIONED THEM AGAINST "GIVING ANYTHING AWAY" ON THE COMPTROLLER ISSUE UNTIL WE ARE ABLE TO EVALUATE THE EFFECT THAT TRIPPE/RICE SCENARIO WILL HAVE ON GHAZI.

6. FYI: ACCORDING TO EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BENNETT, GHAZI WANTS TO GET RID OF NAJIB. ONE OF OUR THOUGHTS IS THAT GHAZI MIGHT BE ABLE TO USE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW AGREEMENT WHICH WOULD FURTHER AGAHANIZE ARIANA (THUS APPEALING TO NATIONALIST FEELINGS) TO ORGANIZE NAJIB OUT OF A JOB AND PRESERVE A PANAM ROLE IN MAINTENANCE AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. ALSO FYI: WE GATHER THAT PANAM WOULD BE WILLING TO MAINTAIN APPROXIMATELY A 10 PERCENT INTEREST IN ARIANA IF THAT WOULD BE A SELLING POINT FOR THE AFGHANS IN CONNECTION WITH THE TRIPPE/RICE SCENARIO.

7. COMMENT: WE WOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR ANY PERSPECTIVES DEPARTMENT CARES TO OFFER US ESPECIALLY WHETHER YOU CAN DETERMINE FROM PANAM IN THE U.S. IF IN FACT TRIPPE AND RICE ARE AS MUCH UNDER THE GUN TO GET MONEY OUT OF ARIANA NOW REPEAT NOW AS THEY HAVE SO STATED TO US HERE TODAY. OBVIOUSLY WE HOPE YOU CAN DO THIS WITHOUT HAVING TRIPPE FIND OUT ABOUT OUR INQUIRY.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DISPUTES, AIRLINES, AVIATION REGULATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: SmithRJ
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975KABUL05140
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: DG ALTERED
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750272-0651
From: KABUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750874/aaaacnjsx.tel
Line Count: 95
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 177570
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: SmithRJ
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <29 JUL 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <25 NOV 2003 by SmithRJ>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PANAM-ARIANA RELATIONS
TAGS: EAIR, EINV, AF, US, PANAM, ARIANA
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006